

Parties, Organizations, and Indigenous Governance: Explaining Subnational Regimes in Bolivia.

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Abstract: More than two decades have passed since Latin American countries recognized their multi-ethnic nature. This “rediscovery” has spurred a wave of interest on the role ethnicity plays in Latin American societies and their political systems. In this context, many political scientists studied the emergence of ethnicity as a political identity, and the later actions by indigenous social movements and political parties. This process also uncovered a political reality of indigenous groups beyond contentious and electoral dynamics, namely: the persistence of indigenous governments parallel to state institutions. Although these forms of governance have not been equally recognized throughout the region, the fact is that rule by customary law occurs *de facto* in many rural, indigenous areas in Latin America. Indigenous governments are pivotal political spaces, and essential to understand how indigenous actors, organizations, and parties combine to affect local politics in Bolivia and other multi-ethnic societies. Political scientists, however, have rather overlooked these formal and informal indigenous governments as arenas of political struggle, privileging the study indigenous parties and organizations. Here, I seek to uncover the political dynamics of indigenous forms of governance. In particular, this paper focuses on the case of Bolivia, and asks *what accounts for the variation in indigenous forms of governance in Bolivia?* I classify indigenous forms of governance into three broad categories: democratic, hybrid, or authoritarian, and argue that two explanatory factors account for such variation, namely: the type of indigenous institutions that organize local politics, and whether these have established corporatist links with the ruling party. Hierarchical organizations linked to the ruling party will tend toward autocratic rule, while horizontal organizations with low party-group connections will exhibit democratic indigenous governments. The myriad combinations in-between will generate hybrid forms of indigenous governance.

I. Introduction

More than two decades have passed since Latin American countries recognized their multi-ethnic nature. Thanks to a series of mobilizations by indigenous social movements and conflicts with the region's nation-states, "indigenous" is no longer a synonym for "class." This rediscovery has spurred a wave of interest on the role ethnicity plays in Latin American societies, and in particular, in their political systems. In this context, many political scientists studied the emergence of ethnicity as a political identity, and the later actions by indigenous social movements and political parties. This process also uncovered a political reality of indigenous groups beyond contentious and electoral dynamics, namely: the persistence of indigenous governments parallel to the state structure.

Anthropologists had long noted the existence of these forms of governance, but focused on their ritual, more symbolic aspects, laying emphasis on the many ways in which indigenous authorities dispense justice rather than on the crucial political role played by indigenous governments. Although these forms of governance have not been equally recognized in all countries, the fact is that they can be very consequential for local and national politics. Indeed, while indigenous autonomy has been legally recognized in Panama, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and in areas of Mexico, and Venezuela (Van Cott 2010), rule by customary law occurs *de facto* in many rural, indigenous areas of Latin America.

Indigenous forms of governance, however, vary substantially not only in terms of their procedures, but also –and most importantly– in their political effects. Some forms of indigenous governance are democratic, whereas others are deeply autocratic. Through an examination of indigenous forms of governance in Bolivia, I aim to improve our existing understanding of how indigenous governments actually work. Thus, this paper seeks to explain *what accounts for the variation in indigenous forms of governance in Bolivia?* I argue that two factors can account for this variation: the type(s) of indigenous-peasant organization(s) that exercise governance locally, and the connections these organizations have with the governing party. These two factors define the norms and procedures of

usos y costumbres (UC henceforth),¹ and the resources available to leaders thereby affecting the dynamics of local governance.

Bolivia is a particularly interesting case to assess the variation of indigenous forms of governance. In Bolivia, while indigenous autonomy has been legally recognized, very few municipalities are transiting toward a system ruled by customary law exclusively. The most common scenario, both in Bolivia and elsewhere in the region, is the coexistence of state and indigenous institutions. Moreover, the new 2009 constitution grants so-called community-based democracy the same status as representative and direct democracy (Art. 11). However, as mentioned, these indigenous forms of governance are not necessarily democratic. Indeed, in some areas, the exercise of civil and political rights is deeply constrained. For instance, in the Chapare region, it is common to hear that coca grower leaders force people to vote for the Movement Toward Socialism (Movimiento al Socialismo – MAS), the ruling party, and sanction, even with violence, those who refuse to do so. What is more, this “peasant union discipline” is applied even to leaders who decide to campaign for other political party. Conversely, in other areas, political decisions are made in open, deliberative assemblies, where individuals are free to participate both in indigenous and state institutions.

Therefore, the political relevance of indigenous governments in multi-ethnic societies, and in Bolivia in particular, is manifold. Indigenous organizations are the main source of governance in most rural areas; citizenship is embedded in them, and cannot be understood outside their functioning. Thus, accounting for these forms of governance is essential to assess how local politics actually work. In addition, many mobilizations and electoral strategies are elaborated and executed by the various indigenous and peasant organizations at the local level. Indeed, in Bolivia, this is how the MAS emerged, and still develops its political strategies. In this context, party-voter linkages mediated by customary law governments provide a different set of constraints on individual voting, even in regular elections.

Furthermore, considering that Bolivia has been recently catalogued as a hybrid regime at the national level (Levitsky and Loxton 2013), the framework proposed here may help account for this process of hybridization. By pointing to the connections

¹ I use UC systems, indigenous governments, and indigenous forms of governance interchangeably.

between the center and local indigenous governments, this framework contributes to understand the subnational spread of the national governments' hegemony, as well as the MAS's electoral success in the countryside and its resounding failures in the larger urban areas, where the party does not have the organizational resources to affect individual voting, even when it has broadened its discourse to include the working and middle class (Madrid 2005, 2008). The argument, however, does not posit that municipalities where the MAS wins are necessarily hybrid or authoritarian. Rather, it focuses on the process whereby individuals, their organizations, and parties come together to affect subnational politics.

While this is a stylized depiction of reality, it can help shed light on the democratic potentials of indigenous governments. However, a better understanding of how UC systems vary subnationally, and of their contributions (or lack thereof) to democracy is essential to assess how politics work in multi-ethnic societies. Moreover, it will contribute to explore the multiple effects and dynamics of multiculturalism in practice. In the following section, I present a cursory overview of the works that have addressed the issue of multiculturalism and indigenous forms of governance in Latin America, and lay out a general framework to account for the variation of indigenous forms of governance. Subsequently, I apply this framework to the Bolivian case, through the examination of four indigenous governments.

II. Multiculturalism and Indigenous Governance in Latin America:

Multiculturalism refers to the many ways in which modern societies accommodate cultural difference. Minority groups can be incorporated into political communities through myriad mechanisms that range from colonization and conquest to voluntary immigration. These different forms of incorporation affect the nature of minority groups, and their relationship with the larger political community (Kymlicka 1995). Since the early 1990s, indigenous movements in Latin America have systematically mobilized with the goal of reforming the state in order to incorporate multicultural rights. Political scientists have given considerable attention to the myriad mobilizations, which led to constitutional reforms in many Latin American countries, and to the subsequent incursions by these movements into the electoral arena. However, this

research has rather overlooked the post-mobilization period, and the implementation of such reforms, especially at the local level (Van Cott 2010). While many anthropologists and activists have indeed paid attention to these issues, they tend to have dichotomous views about the effects of multicultural policies and indigenous politics in general. While some romanticize multiculturalism and indigenous forms of governance, others claim that these automatically hinder the exercise of individual rights.

Political science research has focused on issues such as mobilization and electoral participation (Van Cott 2010). Scholars have elaborated the most varied explanations to account for the mobilization of indigenous peoples, which include the role of globalization and the instruments of international norms, laws, and organizations (Brysk 2000), the failure of the developmental state (Bengoa 2000), or the religious competition between Catholics and Protestants (Trejo 2013), among others. Yashar (2005) provides the arguably most comprehensive account of indigenous mobilization in Latin America, explaining the variation in indigenous mobilization among the region's countries by pointing to the role of neoliberal reforms, and the existence of trans-community networks, and political openness in each country.

Likewise, scholars have explained the emergence and success of indigenous parties by pointing to two sets of factors. One strand of research has highlighted institutional factors, such as decentralization, constitutional reforms, and reserved seats, among others (Van Cott 2005, Rice and Van Cott 2006), or the different organizational ecologies of indigenous movements and their strength, such as the fragmentation of Bolivian movements and the unity of Ecuadorian indigenous peoples, to explain ethnic party formation and success (Van Cott 2005, Lucero 2008). In turn, other scholars argue that the success of ethnic parties can only result from their "ethnopolitist" appeal, which makes them inclusive, reaching simultaneously to the peasantry, urban workers, and the middle classes (Madrid 2005, 2008). While very insightful, these accounts tend to focus primarily on the national level, glossing over the richness of subnational indigenous politics. Van Cott (2008), albeit with a greater focus on municipal rather than indigenous institutions, is one of the few scholars to provide a comparative subnational analysis of indigenous-controlled local governments. As Lucero (2013) contends, Van Cott's (2008) change in scale from the national to the local level allowed the author to explore in

greater detail the positive and negative aspects of customary law governments. Additionally, Van Cott's work helps uncover the importance of indigenous authorities in the making of local politics, beyond mobilizations and electoral periods.

In turn, works on customary law in Latin America provide better insights on the subnational dynamics of indigenous groups, paying particular attention to the tension between collective and individual rights and underscoring their positive and negative aspects. Students of community justice, for instance, assert that it has a logic focused on reintegration and harmonization of the community (Fernández Osco 2001, Hammond 2011, Molina-Rivero 2005), and show that lynching is mostly an urban phenomenon (Albó 2005, Goldstein 2004). Research on UC systems provides more nuanced evidence. While some works portray indigenous forms of governance as democratic, socially encompassing, and deliberative (Rivera 1990), others have uncovered their negative side, especially emphasizing the widespread gender bias against women, and migrants' lower political status (Eisenstadt 2007, Goodale 2009, Andolina 2001, Sieder and Sierra 2011).

Similarly, studies on autonomous indigenous governments in Latin America have highlighted both the strengths and limitations of UC systems. In Oaxaca, for instance, since the 1995 legalization of *usos y costumbres*, 418 municipalities select their leaders through mechanisms that range from inclusionary assemblies to exclusionary councils of elders meetings (Eisenstadt 2007). Works on Oaxacan municipalities have shown that women, migrants, and non-Catholic community members can be excluded from elections and assemblies (Martínez 2013), although in others, migrants present high rates of participation, are overrepresented, and hold important power positions (Danielson 2013). Likewise, Sonnleitner and Eisenstadt (2013) suggest that factionalism and power disputes are a commonplace within indigenous communities, and that UC elections have increased post-electoral conflict (Eisenstadt 2007). Some claim that such conflicts are partly the result of the politicization of indigenous forms of governance, as these are open to external political influences, contrary to the oft-noted assumption that portrays them as closed corporate communities (Wolf 2001). Indeed, numerous studies have analyzed the effects of national political influences on the community level, such as revolutions and mobilizations in Bolivia (Ticona, Rojas, Albó 1995), or state reforms, the emergence of

Zapatismo, and the introduction of new religions for the case of Chiapas (Henríquez Arellano 1999).

Research on indigenous politics in Latin America, then, has followed two separate tracks. On the one hand, political science studies provide insightful explanations of the mobilization and electoral performance of indigenous social movements and parties, with a particular focus on the national level. On the other hand, research on indigenous forms of governance, while focuses on the subnational level and provides rich, in-depth information, is not comparative in nature, and tends to emphasize the uniqueness of each case. Hence, these works have not developed explanations to account for the variation not only in their procedures, but also in the political outcomes of indigenous governments (Sorroza Polo and Danielson 2013). Additionally, these developments in the region have been evaluated very differently; while some romanticize indigenous organizations and forms of governance, others automatically demonize them. To better understand the variation in indigenous forms of governance it is necessary to carry out systematic subnational comparisons that also integrate the effects of social movements, political parties, and national level political dynamics.

III. The Argument: Explaining Variation in Indigenous Forms of Governance

Indigenous forms of governance vary substantially in terms of their regime types, and contributions (or lack thereof) to democracy. Whereas some indigenous forms of governance are democratic, others are openly authoritarian. The interaction of two explanatory factors, namely: the type of indigenous institution that regulates local politics and the links with a corporatist ruling party help account for this variation.

i. The Political Dynamics of Organizations: Hierarchical and Horizontal Structures

The vast research on political organizations and interest groups seems to conclude that the structure of authority is one of the main determinants of organizational democracy. These studies have defined hierarchy in different ways: as a continuum on which one individual or group has more power over others, and as any form of stratification (i.e., class, caste, status) whereby individuals are ranked from higher to lower (Lake 2009). In this paper, I use the first meaning of hierarchy. Works on

organizations and hierarchy have been largely devoted to prove or disprove Michel's iron law of oligarchy (Edelstein 1967, Siegel 2009), which proposes that large-scale organizations will automatically become oligarchical, regardless of how democratic the organizations' goals are. Recent works on organizational democracy, however, have begun delving into the various mechanisms through which hierarchy affects democracy, and helped nuance Michel's proposition.

This new research on interest groups, for instance, has highlighted the relevance of mechanisms that ensure the autonomy and equality of subgroups or factions as major determinants of organizational democracy (see Lipset, Tarrow, and Coleman 1956, Levi et al. 2009, Fox 2007, Edelstein 1967). In this vein, while the existence of political elites are not in and of themselves undemocratic, these works show that hierarchy serves as a particularly effective communication system, lowering collective action costs for top-down flows of information, which are not paralleled by bottom-up participation that could challenge instructions from higher ranks. Conversely, authorities in decentralized organizations, that is, those that foster local autonomy and ensure certain equality among local factions, will face greater obstacles to impose directions from above, as autonomous subgroups are likely to contest such instructions, and their relative equality opens the possibility of potential disagreements amongst them.

Therefore, hierarchical organizations are better suited for the imposition of directions from above than decentralized ones. Hence, owing to their leader-oriented structure, these organizations are likely to be less participatory, while not undemocratic, whereas decentralized organizations, by fostering sub-group equality and autonomy, tend to privilege bottom-up participation and horizontal forms of engagement, which generally impede, or at least hinder, the capacity of leaders to impose decisions in a top-down manner. Thus, local indigenous authorities affiliated to hierarchical organizations will enjoy of less autonomy from national level leaders than those associated to decentralized ones.

ii. Party-Group Relations: Inducements, Constraints, and Organizational Democracy

There are myriad forms in which the state, parties, and organizations can affect one

another,² and scholars have aimed to develop categories of party-group connections, focusing on different aspects. Thomas (2001), for instance, develops a typology based on the intensity of party-group relations that ranges from complete fusion between parties and organizations to open confrontation,³ whereas Roberts (2002) provides a broader typology of party-citizen relations that emphasizes the type of link rather than its intensity. Furthermore, Roberts (2002) argues that multiple linkages presumably evince stronger linkages.

These studies, however, say little about how these linkages shape the internal functioning of the organizations involved. Works on corporatism, a particular type of linkage, have paid greater attention to this issue.⁴ Corporatism refers to a system of interest representation in which the state or a party either creates or grants representational monopoly to certain groups within their respective categories in exchange for accepting restrictions on leadership selection and articulation of demands, and their support to the state (Schmitter 1974). Organizations, then, are subject to the direct control of the state, but also receive considerable benefits intended to entice support, in a combination of constraints and inducements (Collier and Collier 1979). In fact, Thomas (2001) suggests that of all the aspects of party-group relation, the most fundamental factor is the connection with the governing party.

Thus, stronger party-group connections in the context of corporatist ruling parties are expected to negatively affect the internal democracy of the organizations, as the state or party will aim to exert control not only on the organizations' goals but also on their functioning. As a corollary, affiliates of indigenous organizations that have established corporatist arrangements with the governing party will face the government's pressure to

² See Goldstone (2003) for a review of the different ways in which the interaction among parties, states, and social movements has been classified.

³ Three models describe close party-group relations: the integration model presents a situation of identical organization and ideology, whereas in the dominant party model the interest group is subordinated to the party. The cooperation/proximate ideology model entails strong reciprocal connections, but on a more equal standing. The two subsequent models describe more independent party-group interactions. The separation/pragmatic involvement model implies strong independence of parties and interest groups, and ad hoc alliances, whereas the noninvolvement model indicates that party and group have no direct connections. Finally, in the competition/rivalry and conflict/confrontation models, parties and groups are pitted against one another either because they aim at the same goals and constituencies, or because they have major disagreements over ideology and policies.

⁴ For an analysis of how organizational structures affect the likelihood of establishing corporatist linkages, see Wolfe (1985).

demonstrate their support, particularly during elections. This will be most evident at the local level, wherein authorities have direct, face-to-face contact with the rank-and-file, which commonly make up the majority of the organizations' affiliates, hence the majority of voters.

iii. An interactive Model: Explaining Regime Variation in Indigenous Forms of Governance

The previous discussion described the mechanisms whereby each of these two factors, organizational structure and party-group relations, affect the prospects for democratic governance. Here, I present an interactive model to explain the variation in indigenous forms of governance, and present the hypothesized causal links and mechanisms. Figure 1.0 depicts the forms of indigenous governance resulting from the combinations of these two explanatory factors.

I argue that UC governments organized around hierarchical structures, with close connections with the governing party will tend toward authoritarianism. This is because vertical organizations are particularly effective in transmitting top-down flows of information, and corporatist parties will make use of such structure to impose their preferences, with little –if any– backlash from the rank-and-file. Although large-scale vertical organizations do tend toward oligarchy, when they are autonomous from corporatist ruling parties, will evince more spaces for factionalism and dissent, as preferences are not imposed as strongly from above. Therefore, I argue that hierarchical organizations with weaker connections to ruling corporatist parties will generate hybrid forms of governance, that is, those which combine democratic and authoritarian elements in varying degrees.

In turn, horizontal organizations disconnected from the governing party will exhibit democratic forms of governance. Local autonomy and decentralization are not suitable for top-down impositions, and the autonomy from the ruling party further reduces the motivations to do so. However, if leaders in these organizations engage into corporatist arrangements with the ruling party, then local authorities will tend to impose the party's preferences, most likely in exchange for personal benefits. This will generate a hybrid form of governance that is less stable, given that the connections with the corporatist

party are likely to be based on individual alliances, and not on institutional arrangements, which are harder to craft due to the organization’s decentralized nature.

Figure 1.0: Explaining Variation in Indigenous Forms of Governance

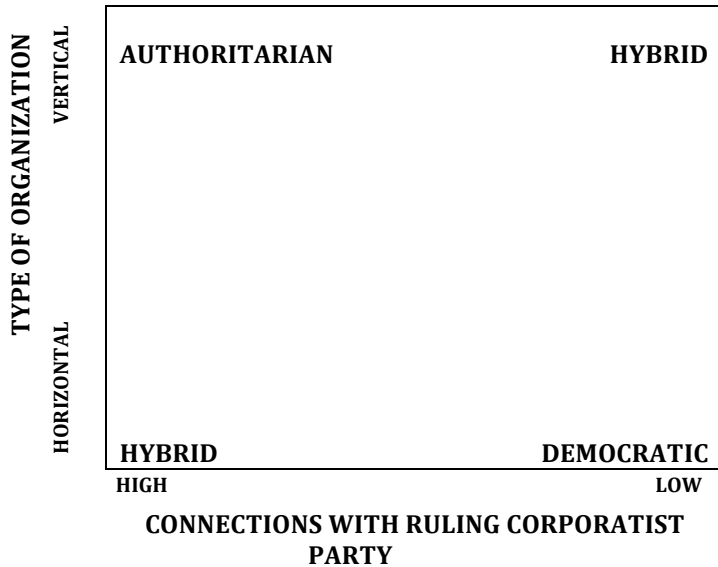


Figure 1.0, however, portrays a static picture of the proposed framework. Changes in the explanatory factors can lead to changes in the form of indigenous governance practiced locally. Change is more likely to come about due to modifications to, or the end of party-group linkages, as organizational reforms are more costly and take more time to be implemented. Hence, the fastest route to regime change is expected to occur when parties and groups either establish or break such corporatist linkages.

IV. The Central Government: The MAS, Hegemony, and Corporatism

As mentioned, this framework assumes that the establishment of corporatist linkages between the ruling party and social organizations is inherently negative for democratic governance. In this sense, the MAS party is particularly relevant for this argument, as it has revived old corporatist forms of linkages, very much in line with the corporatist governments of the post-1952 revolution period, and has co-opted much of the leadership of the main indigenous-peasant organizations in Bolivia (Zagada et al. 2011). Additionally, the MAS is considered as a dominant party, that is, one that permits opposition, but with no real chances of alternation, which further increases its hegemony

over social actors.⁵

The MAS party's origins date back to the large-scale political mobilizations of the mid-1990s. Although with a primary influence of the coca growers, the MAS emerged from Bolivia's peasant movements (Albro 2005). In this sense, owing to the substantial influence of the peasant unions, the MAS holds a predominant peasant identity, although it combines, in varying degrees, an indigenous discourse and a socialist program (Do Alto 2011, Postero 2010). Likewise, in terms of structure, the MAS does not have its own separate structure, and the legislators claim not to be politicians but the messengers' of their own organizations (Albro 2005). Indeed, the party's bylaws establish that militants should participate through the social organizations that form the party, and to which they are affiliated (Mayorga 2010).

The MAS went from being a local party, with a primarily rural base, to a national party in about ten years. Today, it is the only party with presence in all departments and municipalities of the country, and the only one with real chances of winning the presidency in the 2014 elections. The virtual absence of a political opposition, which many claim is the direct result of the government's persecution, primarily through the judicialization of political conflicts and the incarceration of opposition leaders, has further consolidated the MAS's political hegemony (Zegada et al. 2011). Additionally, the MAS controls the majority of the congress, most municipal governments, and even the judicial system. In this vein, it is striking that, although the MAS's campaigns have been based on a discourse against traditional parties, when in government, it revived classic forms of conducting politics, particularly corporatism.

Indeed, in 2006 when the MAS became the governing party, all the power concentrated in the hands of Evo Morales and his closest collaborators, and the executive office turned automatically into the party's main decision-making institution (Do Alto 2011). Furthermore, from 2006 to 2008 the government managed to control the main social organizations in the country, primarily through two coordinating efforts. First, the National Coordinator for Change (CONALCAM) was created as an unconditional ally for the government, responsible for defending the "process of change" that Morales claimed to have initiated in Bolivia in 2006. CONALCAM comprised five of the main

⁵ For a discussion of dominant parties, see Magaloni and Kricheli (2010).

indigenous organizations in the country, CSUTCB, CSCIB, Bartolinas, CONAMAQ, CIDOB, and the coca growers,⁶ among other non-indigenous movements. The second effort at coordinating the indigenous-peasant movement was the Unity Pact, which comprises the same five organizations along with the Landless Movement, the Coordinator of Ethnic Peoples of Santa Cruz, the Mojeño People's Organization, and the Guaraní People's Assembly. The Unity Pact was particularly successful in elaborating a unified position that was partially incorporated in the 2009 constitution. Both of these umbrella organizations, however, have been rife with conflict among those social movements that are unconditional with the government and the rather distant allies.

Currently, the government's closest allies remain the main peasant union organizations that created the MAS, namely: CSUTCB, Bartolina Sisa, the former colonizers, and the coca growers, whereas the relation with the more "indigenous" organizations, such as CONAMAQ and CIDOB, became rather ambivalent and even conflictive (Salman 2010, Zegada et al. 2011). In this context, Morales has become the "glue" that holds the MAS and its loose coalition of supporting social movements together with his charismatic appeal (Stefanoni and Do Alto 2010). Furthermore, the role of clientelistic programs, most notably "Bolivia Changes, Evo Delivers" has been crucial in maintaining the support of the social organizations in the countryside (Córdova 2013). As will be detailed in the following sections, although Morales' popularity has waned in the last years, the president still garners considerable support, based on a mix of loyalty, coercion, and clientelism.

V. Indigenous Governments in Bolivia: Organizations, Parties, and Regime Types

Bolivian UC governments in the highlands and valleys are mostly composed of a mix of peasant unions and *ayllus*, a pre-Hispanic form of indigenous organization (Ticona, Rojas and Albó 1995). While peasant unions are more hierarchical organizations, the *ayllus* are structured in a rather decentralized manner. Indeed, *ayllus*

⁶ CSUTCB is the Unitary Syndical Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia; CSCIB is the Syndical Confederation of Intercultural Communities of Bolivia (former colonizers). These are the national level organizations of the male peasant unions of Bolivia. The female peasant unions are also organized along territorial lines, and federated at the national level in a single organization, the National Federation of Peasant-Indigenous-First Nation Women of Bolivia "Bartolina Sisa." CONAMAQ is the Council of Markas and Ayllus of Qullasuyu, and CIDOB is the Indigenous Confederation of the East and Amazon of Bolivia.

are not necessarily affiliated with a national-level confederation, and until recently, most *ayllus* were rather grouped into regional organizations, which confederated only in 1997 in CONAMAQ. Still today, the primary supra-*ayllu* form of organization is the *suyu*, which represents each of the 16 nations. In turn, peasant unions were created in a top-down process after the 1952 revolution, which was essentially directed to impose the labor union model in the countryside, with a centralized, national leadership, used as an effective corporatist mechanism. As a corollary, in many respects, local autonomy is much stronger in the *ayllus* than in the peasant unions. Additionally, internal rules in the *ayllus* are geared to prevent power concentration, especially the rotation system and the prohibition of reelection, which are incompatible with the creation of a political elite. In turn, peasant unions may reelect authorities for numerous periods, and are more leader-oriented. Thus, following the framework detailed above, and considering the corporatist nature of the MAS party and Morales' government, peasant unions with strong connections with the MAS tend to establish autocratic UC governments, whereas *ayllus* with no collaboration with the MAS are likely to govern in a more democratic way. Hybrid regimes stem from either peasant unions with weaker links with the MAS, or *ayllus* with strong connections to the party.

In order to assess these different forms of indigenous governance, I follow Gibson's (2012) approach, and focus on the effective exercise of political rights. This, as the author suggests, places the attention on whether institutions and procedures "facilitate or obstruct the exercise of *rights* by citizens of the subnational jurisdiction" (Gibson 2012: 14, emphasis in the original). Although this author only focuses on participation and contestation (access to power), I will focus both on access to, and exercise of power,⁷ that is, on how governments and funds are administrated. While some scholars argue that studies of regime type should only focus on access to power (Mazzuca 2010), I claim that in UC governments both are, to a certain extent, conflated. In fact, Mazzuca (2010: 342) argues that "the access to political power and the exercise of political power are simply two analytically distinct aspects of the institutional structure of the modern territorial state." Nonetheless, in other forms of government these are not necessarily separate aspects, and both affect issues of regime change and maintenance. In UC governments,

⁷ See Mazzuca (2010) for a complete analysis of the differences between access and exercise of power.

for instance, assemblies serve both to elect leaders, and to decide community projects. Hence, with regards to access to power, I focus on participation and contestation, and concerning the exercise of power, I assess whether indigenous forms of governance are inclusive in terms of resource administration and leaders accountable to their base members.

Thus, I have classified indigenous forms of governance into three broad categories: democratic, authoritarian, and hybrid. First, in democratic UC governments, individuals can fully enjoy their political and civil rights. Governance is inclusive and leaders are highly accountable to their constituencies. Second, in authoritarian UC systems, only members with particular political affiliations can run for authority positions, while dissidents are excluded from elections, sanctioned, and forbidden to compete. Participation is deeply constrained, and the exercise of freedoms of expression and association, among others, is virtually inexistent. Leaders are less accountable to their constituencies, and more responsive to the government and parties, and deliver funds and projects based on members' political allegiance. Finally, hybrid UC regimes combine both democratic and authoritarian practices in varied ways.

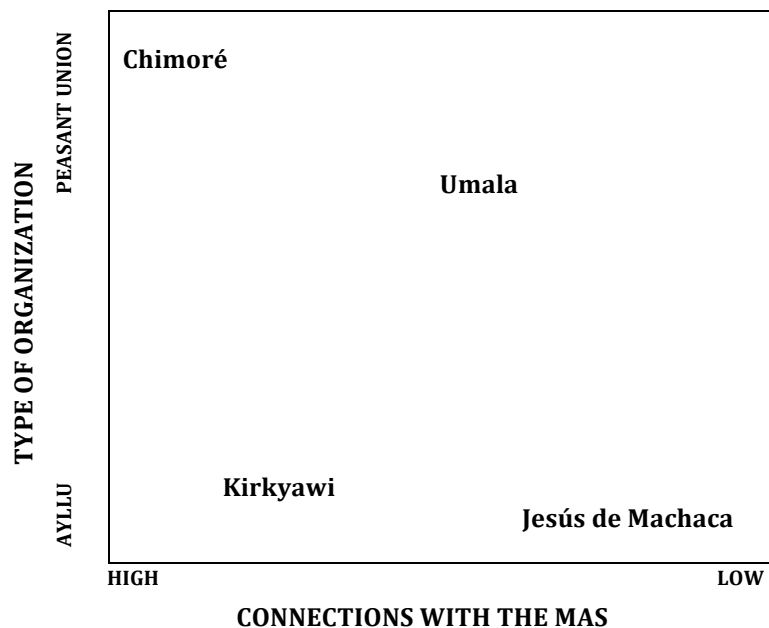
To explain such variation, I use the subnational method and, in particular, its "within-case" version, which entails comparing subnational units within the same country (Snyder, 2001). I selected four municipalities (Table 3.0), which correspond to four indigenous governments, controlling for economic and demographic factors across cases. The cases show that ethnicity, geography, and economic and demographic factors cannot explain the variation of indigenous forms of governance. Figure 2.0 shows how the four cases situate in terms of the two explanatory factors.

Table 3.0: Cases, Control Variables, and Variation in Indigenous Forms of Governance in Bolivia

Jurisdiction	Quechua	Aymara	HDI	Inequality (Theil Index)	% of Rural Population	Indigenous Form of Governance
Chimoré	85%	8%	0.561	0.26	75% (out of 15264)	Authoritarian
Bolívar	91.6%	4.3%	0.372	0.148	100% (out of 8635)	Hybrid
Umala	1.12%	96.6%	0.561	0.168	100% (out of 9583)	Hybrid
Jesús de Machaca	0.32%	94.42%	0.598	0.16	100% (out of 15148)	Democratic
Bolivia	30.71%	25.23%	0,692	0.606	35.3% (out of 9.627.260)	

Source: Bolivian Census (2001); UNDP-Human Development Index (2004), Bolivia.

Figure 2.0: Indigenous Forms of Governments in Bolivia



VI. Democratic Indigenous Governance in Jesús de Machaca

In the *marka* Jesús de Machaca, a rural town located in the Ingavi province, the *ayllu* remains the main form of social organization. While this town converted to the peasant union system after the 1952 revolution, the *ayllu* managed to survive, and in the late 1980s, it began its official re-conversion toward the *ayllu* system (Choque and Mamani 2001, Colque and Cameron 2010). However, Jesús de Machaca is still affiliated

to CSUTCB, although the most relevant organization for inter-*ayllu* relations is SIMACO (Ingavi Suyu of Markas, Ayllus, and First-Nation Communities), which represents the *ayllus* of the Ingavi province. Furthermore, although CSUTCB is one of Morales' closest allies (Salman 2010), Jesús de Machaca is considerably autonomous from the MAS (Viaña 2011), and even CSUTCB's representative for Jesús de Machaca claims that he is not a "*masista*" (Author interview, February 2013). Additionally, in 2009 Jesús de Machaca initiated a process to establish an indigenous autonomous government, that is, based on customary law exclusively (Cameron 2012).

In terms of organization, the *ayllu* system is notably decentralized, and local autonomy is highly valued. The lowest level is the community, followed by the *ayllu*, the *marka*, and the *suyu*, which is the equivalent of nation and, generally, does not coincide with the state's subnational boundaries. This, along with the rotation system whereby authority positions rotate yearly or biyearly among families, communities, and upper political units, without the possibility of re-election, make it extremely harder to impose decisions from above. In this vein, autonomy and decentralization provide a fertile soil for the emergence of a vibrant democracy in Jesús de Machaca.

Access to Power: The *marka* Jesús de Machaca, as most *ayllus* in the Andes, is divided into two halves, MACOJMA and MACOAS, which are in turn, divided into *ayllus*, and communities. The most important positions are the *Jach'a Mallku* and *Jach'a Mallku Tayka*, at the *marka* level, and the selections for candidates to such posts is regulated by three main principles, namely: rotation, *takhi*, and *chacha-warmi* (Choque and Mamani 2001). The *takhi* ensures that candidates who move up to more important positions have necessarily fulfilled lower level posts (Viadez and Blanes 2009, Colque and Cameron 2010); authority positions are exercised following the *chacha-warmi* requirement, whereby women and men, most commonly a married couple, hold office together (Albro 2005).⁸ Finally, and arguably the most important principle, rotation, which, as was mentioned above, entails that all authority posts rotate on a yearly or biyearly basis.

⁸ Jesús de Machaca, as a *marka*, is divided into two halves: MACOJMA and MACOAS. The highest authority is the Jacha Mallku Awki and the Mallku Tayka, who is commonly his wife. Both are elected at the *marka* level. At the *ayllu* level the authorities are the Jilir Mallku Awki and the Mallku Tayka, and then

This system has had two positive democratic effects. First, it prevents power concentration in the hands of a few leaders, and reduces the chances of co-optation by political actors. Second, it ensures an equitable system of territorial representation, wherein all families, communities, and relevant political units are represented at the major decision-making institutions. Moreover, given that serving as an authority is seen as a service to the community, the emphasis is not placed on the candidate's political trajectory or affiliation. Thus, unlike the coca-grower unions, where only MAS-militants can be candidates for authority positions, the *ayllu* system in Jesús de Machaca has ensured political pluralism within the indigenous organization.

However, some claim that the *takhi* represents a challenge for the younger community members, who, although more educated than the town's older population, cannot accede to the highest authority positions because they have not held minor posts. However, education is now being considered when selecting candidates, albeit respecting the list and rotation systems (Colque and Cameron 2010). Additionally, young people participate more actively in decision-making, especially in the elaboration of local government's bylaws (Cameron 2012). Similarly, many single and widowed women and men hold authority posts with a relative, which evinces certain relaxation of that requirement, although maintaining the *chacha-warmi* principle.

Moreover, right before the 2004 local elections, the authorities and base members gathered in the *cabildo*, a meeting that serves as the main decision-making institution, and decided to apply these mechanisms to the selection of candidates for the municipal government. To do so, the main authorities decided to divide the jurisdiction into five electoral districts so as to ensure a territorial equilibrium in the municipal council. The candidate for mayor was then selected by the *cabildo* from the pool of candidates selected in these districts, which also agreed on rotating the candidate for mayor in future elections to ensure equal representation (Colque 2009). While MACOJMA's candidate won in the 2004 elections, in 2010 the MAS's candidate was elected, without any post-electoral conflicts. Indeed, MAS militants' indicated that they were completely free to carry out their campaigns, even when MACOJMA was in power at that time (Albó 2012).

at the community level the main authorities are the Mallku Awki and the Mallku Tayka. At each level, these authorities are assisted by other community members who have specific functions.

As with candidate selection, participation also takes place in open meetings, *cabildos* and *Tantachawis*, which are held on a regular basis, and where all community members are allowed to talk, even migrants and young members, although it is true that men speak in public more often than women.⁹ In these assemblies, the *ayllus* carry out their elections, where all except for younger members are allowed to vote, and make the most important decisions, which has granted their form of governance the label of “assembly democracy” (Author interview, December 2012). Indeed, candidates are selected in open, participatory meetings, where voters commonly form lines behind their preferred candidate. While some may claim that this increases the chances of intimidation, the fact is that the relative social equality reduces this probability to almost zero (Colque en Cameron 2010, Viadez and Blanes 2009).

Outside these assemblies, individuals are also free to campaign for any candidate, join any party or organization, and defend their political preferences in these gatherings. Indeed, community members have voted and campaigned for MACOJMA and the MAS without any negative consequence. For instance, the referendum in Jesús de Machaca for the conversion to an indigenous autonomy was approved by a slight percentage of 56%, which shows that neither the governing party nor the indigenous political organization have managed to capture local politics (Cameron 2012). While there have occurred episodes of violence related to the autonomy process instigated by MAS militants (Cameron 2012), and some claim that the MAS’s campaigns are still essentially clientelistic (Albó 2012), indigenous authorities do not use their power to constrain individuals’ political behavior, and are required to remain politically neutral when serving as authorities.

The type of indigenous governance in Jesús de Machaca has prevented the MAS from becoming a hegemonic party, as is the case in numerous municipalities in the highlands and valleys. Quite the contrary, the MAS along with MACOJMA, and other minor parties, have campaigned to gain seats in the municipal government, and individuals have freely voted for their preferred candidates both for the indigenous and

⁹ The presence of women in community meetings was virtually inexistent after the imposition of peasant unions in Jesús de Machaca, which are heavily dominated by men. It began to change when the town reconverted to the *ayllu* system (Colque and Cameron 2010; Choque and Mamani 2001).

municipal seats. In this sense, Jesús de Machaca is a good example of a balance between collective and individual rights.

Exercise of Power: In terms of how power is exercised, not only are *ayllu* authorities accountable to their constituencies and controlled by them, but also base members seem to be active participants in the management of the local government. Indeed, as part of the *cabildos'* agenda, attendants can assess current authorities' performance, and, if they find that authorities have not satisfied the community's mandate, they can revoke them (Colque and Cameron 2010), as occurred in 2011 in *ayllu Ch'ama*, one of the 24 *ayllus* that comprise Jesús de Machaca, when the *cabildo* decided to revoke the *mallku*. Being removed from office is a major social discredit, which also affects the authorities' extended families and serves as a powerful mechanism to keep authorities accountable (Author interview, October 2012).

Authorities are held accountable through myriad mechanisms, which are also applicable to the municipal government. Given that, by law, indigenous organizations are entitled to participate in the elaboration of the municipal budget and development plans, in Jesús de Machaca this is regulated by customary law, and as such, subject to a series of consultations in the respective assemblies (Viadez and Blanes 2009). Moreover, the *cabildos* are used as spaces of accountability in which the mayors inform attendants about projects, resources, and the management of municipal governance in general, although the *cabildo's* decisions are not legally binding. This has considerably increased grassroots participation and information (Fundación Tierra 2013).

Moreover, when it comes to resource management, indigenous authorities in Jesús de Machaca have systematically aimed to foster social fairness. For instance, they devised a mechanism to distribute land whereby those who obtain smaller landholdings are entitled to the most productive land so as to maintain equality. Indeed, one study found that the Gini's coefficient of land use was extremely low, with a 0.16 value. Additionally, the *cabildo* launched a "mini-decentralization" of the municipal budget, distributing 70% of the budget among its 24 *ayllus*, also taking into consideration their population, which reduced the clientelistic pressures on the municipal government to a considerable extent (Colque and Cameron 2010). Furthermore, they devised a

coordinating mechanism, the inter-institutional commission, which includes all relevant political institutions in Jesús de Machaca. This institution guarantees that all projects are elaborated with the information collected from community members and then consulted with them, which has allowed each community to actively participate in the planning, review, execution, and oversight of their respective projects (Viadez and Blanes 2009).

The political effects of this form of governance have translated into greater participation, increased societal control over authorities, and a more leveled playing field for political contenders, both in the indigenous and municipal government, which has prevented the emergence of a local hegemon. In this sense, Jesús de Machaca is an example of how indigenous forms of governance, through their own *usos y costumbres*, can contribute to democratize local politics. Additionally, it shows that certain forms of governance can contribute to democratize state institutions, making them more participatory and encompassing. While this case provides insightful evidence on the democratic potentials of customary law governments, other indigenous forms of governance can exhibit a completely opposite scenario. To this I turn in the following section.

VII. Coca Grower Unions and Authoritarian Indigenous Governance

The coca grower or *cocalero* unions were created to organize newly established settlers in the coca-producing regions. They gained national notoriety as a movement in the 1980s and 1990s due to their disruptive protests against US-backed eradication programs (Farthing and Kohl 2010). Since then, the coca growers have become the vanguard of the peasant movement (Healy 1991, Ticona, Rojas and Albó 1995). As a result, in the mid-1990s, these unions, along with other peasant and indigenous movements, decided to create a political instrument, the Movimiento al Socialismo, which explains their strong links with the current government (Komadina and Geoffry 2007). Furthermore, Morales is still the president of the *cocaleros* in the tropics of Cochabamba, and has repeatedly traveled to the tropics to participate in the coca growers' assemblies, wherein he informs, consults, justifies, or legitimizes his decisions (Córdova 2013). Additionally, in several occasions, Morales has threatened to mobilize the coca farmers if the congress does not approve a law or initiative of particular interest for the

government (Zegada et al. 2011). In Chimoré, and throughout the tropics, the MAS shares its local office with the peasant union.

In terms of structure, coca growers are extremely vertical and disciplined, partly a consequence of state efforts to isolate them, which turned coca farmers into the most conscientious and dues-paying members of all the peasant unions in Bolivia (Albro 2005, Healy 1991). Additionally, according to Ticona, Rojas, and Albó (1995), a process of stark differentiation between the leadership and base members has taken place in the peasant movement in general, and the coca grower unions in particular. These leaders, due to their political skills, have become indispensable for the *cocalero* organization, even more so now that Morales is in power. Thus, this is a very top-down, leader-oriented organization, especially effective in mobilizations. The Special Federation of Chimoré (SFC), in particular, was one of the first *cocalero* unions of the Bolivian tropics, created in the 1970s (Gobierno Autónomo de Chimoré 2008).¹⁰ The SFC is one of the six federations affiliated to the Coordinating Committee of the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba, which, as mentioned, Evo Morales has presided for over eighteen years. Chimoré is, then, one of Morales' strongholds, electorally and otherwise. This configuration of hierarchy and closeness to the government generated incentives to foster authoritarian practices at the local level.

Access to Power: Contestation for SFC positions is highly restricted. *Sindicatos* resemble a Western, Marxist institution, as they elect authorities formally, rather than rotating them by age and prior experience, and reelection is permitted (Van Cott 2008). Although all candidates must have a piece of land in the jurisdiction and be affiliated to the peasant union (Córdova 2005), the main selection criterion is the candidates' background, especially their political trajectory and skills (Ticona, Rojas, and Albó 1995). Indeed, in the tenth congress, the Organizational Commission decided to incorporate an additional requirement: candidates should be affiliated with the MAS and should not have any

¹⁰ Seventeen centrals and 124 peasant unions compose the Special Federation of Colonizers of Chimoré. It is directly affiliated to Coordinating Committee of the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba, which, in turn, is affiliated to the National Confederation of Intercultural Communities of Bolivia (CSCIB). The main positions are the Secretary General, the Secretary of Affairs, and the Secretary of Acts.

connection with the “traditional” political parties (FSCCT 2003 in Córdova 2005), which had the effect of completely eliminating plurality in the coca growers’ organization.

Additionally, given that the *cocaleros* control the municipal governments and are the MAS’s local branch, they decide who will compete for local office, so the requirements that apply for union elections are also extended to candidates for municipal government. In so doing, the *cocaleros* have ousted legitimately elected mayors, as was the case of Juana Quispe in 2004, arguing that her candidacy was imposed from above, although others assert that her ousting had a sexist undertone. In any case, the fact is that in the 2010 elections, all the candidates for local office were MAS militants, and while dissidence does exist, it is easily silenced either by violence or clientelism (Author interview, March 2013).

Participation, for both the base members and leaders, is deeply constrained. Here, only men are allowed to vote for authority positions, as women have their own organization, which is subjugated to its male-counterpart. Indeed, peasant leaders in the Tropics who campaign for another party are sanctioned for “political treason” and forbidden to hold authority positions in the peasant union or any other public office within their jurisdiction (Author interview, February 2013).¹¹ Furthermore, FSUTCC – CSUTCB’s division in Cochabamba–, to which Chimoré is affiliated, stipulates in its bylaws that “it is absolutely forbidden that regional centrals, sub-centrals, and peasant unions be part of, or support right-wing or neoliberal political parties or civil society associations” (FSUTCC 2012: 17, my translation), and add that union leaders at the provincial, regional, sub-central, and union levels that betray the political instrument by supporting such parties will be “sanctioned with the expulsion and will be forbidden to apply to any post in the state or the organization, according to our own norms” (FSUTCC 2012: 17-18, my translation).

Although coca growers receive significant benefits from the central government, they are also subject to the strongest pressures to follow orders. Authorities, then, are pressured from the upper-levels of the coca grower union and the government to discipline the base members politically. As a high level authority of the Six Federations

¹¹ Although, as one informant pointed out, this extreme sanction is rarely ever applied, as discipline is so strong that neither base-members nor leaders defy this rule (Author interview, March 2013).

claimed, coca growers are Evo Morales' soldiers. Leaders, he goes on, "are in a delicate equilibrium between representing our constituencies and being loyal to our president," and adds, "sometimes we need to discipline our people" (Author interview, February 2013). In this sense, if a leader is revoked, then, it is most likely due to political reasons.

This restrictive sense of participation is also applied to local elections. The results of the last municipal elections show that only MAS candidates won seats in the municipal government, and there are many stories of people who were forced not only to vote, but also to campaign for the party's candidates. Those who refused to do so claim to have been punished, either economically or with outright violence (Author interview, March 2013). In fact, national CSCIB and CSUTCB leaders declared that all of their affiliates would be registered as MAS militants to vote for Morales in the 2014 presidential elections. CSCIB's General Secretary, Johny Maraza Chambi, claimed that "we, as an organization, function in a unified fashion, and we will go down to the regional levels, the *centrales*, and communities to re-register [...] We have about one and a half million members, and I am sure that we will re-register, and register the new militants" (Erbol 02/10/2014, my translation). What is more, individuals are faced with violent sanctions if they do not campaign for the MAS or do not attend pro-government mobilizations, and many have reported the existence of dungeons to imprison violators of the union law. The main sanction for coca-growers, nonetheless, is the eviction from their land, their *catos*, which is used by authorities as an effective mechanism to discipline the rank and file (Author interview, April 2013; Córdova 2005).

Exercise of Power: In terms of exercise of power, the *cocalero* authorities tend to deliver projects based mostly on political reasons. The SFC has experienced the advantages resulting from its links with the party, receiving a significant amount of funds and projects from the central government. For instance, Chimoré will host an international airport that has an expected cost of 36.5 million dollars (Gobierno Autónomo de Chimoré 2008, Opinión, 12/02/2012). In fact, the Tropics of Cochabamba concentrate a substantial portion of the projects funded by the clientelistic social program "Bolivia Changes, Evo Delivers," which privileges municipalities and organizations where Morales obtained positive electoral results (Córdova 2013). However, leaders do not dispense these funds

in an equitable fashion, as non-coca growers report being excluded from the planning and budgeting process and resent the lack of investment in their areas, not to mention the widespread discrimination against the Yuqui people, a minority ethnic group, by coca grower unions (Van Cott 2008).

In this sense, those who are loyal will find support for their political careers, obtain a job, even if it is a minor one, or will get jobs or scholarships for their family members. The relationship between the base members and high ranks can be described as an exchange where the former provide electoral support and mobilize when instructed, and the latter provide jobs and recognition (Molina 2011). In Bolivia, this is called “*peguismo*” and the coca growers are the best case in point for this type of interchange. Indeed, it is common to hear that nowadays being an authority is not only an honor, but can also provide significant income for the family, and even the extended family and friends (Author interviews, February 2013, March, 2013). This trend is further enhanced by the fact that coca grower unions in these areas are virtually the state; they are in charge of allocating land, dispensing justice, providing basic services, and the like. In Morales’ view “the unions have turned Cochabamba’s tropics into a “small-state” [...] and have become the main form of authority” (Morales in Córdova 2005). With considerable benefits, but also substantial responsibilities, *Cocaleros* in the tropics are Morales’s paramilitary forces, politically and more broadly.

VIII. Hybrid Indigenous Governance in Bolívar and Umala

Ayllu Kirkyawi,¹² located in the municipality of Bolívar in the department of Cochabamba, has been able to maintain its form of organization even throughout the republican period, despite the 1953 Land Reform and the radical process of unionization of the countryside that took place afterwards (Gobierno Autónomo de Bolívar 2002, Antequera 2010). In terms of organization, Kirkyawi is very similar to Jesús de Machaca;¹³ the main difference is that Kirkyawi is affiliated to CONAMAQ. Umala¹⁴ is a rural town located in the Aroma Province in La Paz Department. The main form of

¹² The *ayllu* is divided into two halves, ten *jap’is*, and about 60 communities.

¹³ Kirkyawi, however, is probably the only *ayllu* where, due to historical reasons, the caciques are elected from certain families. Nonetheless, caciques were reinstated about a decade ago, and they cannot make any decision without the approval of the Kuraj Tatas’ Council (Antequera 2010, COAMAC 2012).

¹⁴ The Central Agraria of Umala is divided into 10 sub-centrals and 66 communities.

organization in this town is the peasant union, the Central Agraria of Umala, a classic example of the peasant unions established in the aftermath of the 1952 revolution, which combine, to some extent, labor union and indigenous practices.

In Umala, peasant authorities and base-members claim to be part of the “process of change” Morales’ government initiated, but are not necessarily linked to the MAS as party militants. Indeed, while there is a strong identification with Evo Morales, the party is seen as a “distant brother,” so people in Umala call themselves *Evistas* and not *Masistas* (Author interview, November 2012). In turn, authorities in Kirkyawi have strong connections to the MAS party, as the government gave them access to their land titles, and made them the legitimate interlocutors on this subject (Antequera 2011). Currently, however, there is a general feeling among *ayllu* members that the government is not really advancing their demands, and has rather opted for a class-based agenda (Author interview, February 2013). In fact, CONAMAQ has recently adopted a more critical position vis-à-vis the government. Still, rural areas in Cochabamba tend to be highly sympathetic not only of Morales but also of the MAS party.

Access to Power: Rules to access power differ in several respects in these two UC systems. In Umala, the most important authority in the peasant union is the Executive Secretary. Rotation may work here primarily at the community level, but leaders can be reelected. Although being pro-government is a requirement to be a candidate for the peasant union, being a MAS militant is not mandatory as in the coca grower regions. In this sense, competition for authority posts is restricted due to political reasons, as in most rural areas of Bolivia, but not to the point where pluralism has been completely eliminated. Still, leaders are not allowed to campaign for the so-called neoliberal parties. While in the early 2000s, during the great indigenous mobilizations, Umala sought to depoliticize the election of the Executive Secretary, in an attempt to break with the traditional parties, many base members observed that since Morales is in power, the selection of authority positions has been once again permeated by political interests (Author interview, January 2013). Thus, the peasant union in Umala selects authorities that are in line with Morales’ government, but not necessarily MAS militants, and the same occurs with the municipal government. Indeed, it is interesting to note that, while

Evo Morales commonly wins by a landslide in Umala, at the municipal level, although the Mayor is a MAS militant, the party only obtained one out of five council members.

In Kirkyawi, posts are filled following the gender complementarity scheme characteristic of the *ayllus*, and authority positions last for only one year, and rotate among families and communities (Gobierno Autónomo de Bolívar 2002, Antequera 2010, COAMAC 2012). Candidates commonly emerge from predetermined lists that organize candidate selection from the community level up. While this system is designed to prevent power concentration and politicization, the links with Morales' government, and the idea that the MAS party will bring resources to area, especially via programs such as "Evo Delivers," has led many authorities to establish deals with the MAS, and thus exert their influence during election times and at assemblies to strengthen the MAS's power locally (COAMAC 2012, Author interview, April 2013). As a current CONAMAQ authority from Bolívar indicated, candidates who are co-opted by the MAS can credibly promise to bring more resources to the area (Author interview, May 2013). Therefore, while party affiliation does not seem to be a requisite to be an authority, candidates are selected also because of their political allegiance (Sheild 2013), which entails a stark contrast from the candidate selection procedures in Jesús de Machaca.

These links with the MAS have strengthened the power of local indigenous authorities in Bolívar, particularly because many see the MAS as a platform for their own political careers, which has created incentives for authorities to show positive electoral results. Therefore, when it refers to the municipal elections, MAS candidates obtain a substantial vote share, which has granted the party the control of the municipal government for over ten years. In the last local elections, for instance, the MAS candidate won by a landslide, and the party obtained four out of five seats in the city council. Nonetheless, a group in Kirkyawi created a civil society organization to contest local elections, POKUY, which has prevented the MAS from becoming completely hegemonic, although its vote share was still substantially lower and does not really have the capacity to compete against the MAS candidates.

In both cases, participation occurs in gatherings that take place on a regular basis. In Umala, elections take place in assemblies by direct vote among the adult affiliated men, as there is a separate association for women, the Bartolina Sisa (Chuquimia 2012).

Although the scheme of participation is very similar in these UC systems, most analysts agree, and leaders confirm, that deliberation in the peasant union is devoted to support Morales' political agenda (Ledema in Komadina and Geffroy 2007). Some community members have even claimed that, in assemblies, authorities force people to vote for pro-government candidates and to mobilize to support the government's initiatives, arguing that, otherwise, they will not have any projects or funds (Author interview, March 2013). The hierarchical nature of the peasant union facilitates top-down instructions, particularly those coming from the national and departmental leadership, which are close allies of the central government. However, in terms of political participation in Umala, given that local authorities are loyal to Morales but not necessarily to the party, its influence is rather indirect, so individuals are not coerced to vote for MAS candidates. In this sense, while there are pressures from authorities to follow certain political directions, citizens in Umala do not face violence if they fail to comply with their leaders' instructions, as in the coca grower unions, although as will be observed below, dissenters may be excluded from funds and resources managed by peasant authorities.

In Kirkyawi, as in Jesús de Machaca, all community members vote, both men and women, except for the younger members who are only allowed to participate in the discussions. Participation in the *ayllu* is not completely free, as co-opted authorities also attempt to force their base members to comply with their own agendas. A former authority explained to me that *ayllu* authorities in Bolívar are likely to sanction base-members who do not attend a protest or other form of mobilization (Author interview, April 2013). In the *ayllu*, however, given its decentralized nature, there are more spaces for dissent and independent thinking, as higher-level leaders cannot easily impose their decisions on community authorities and base members. For instance, the debate in *ayllu* Kirkyawi with regards to the possibility of transiting to an indigenous autonomy, which implies that all authorities will be elected by way of customary law, thereby excluding political parties including the MAS, shows that there are some spaces for political dissent (Antequera 2010). The same occurs with the establishment of POKUY as an alternative political contender to the MAS. However, both the pro-autonomy group and POKUY supporters are minority groups, which evinces the strong influence of the MAS on political participation in Bolívar.

Exercise of Power: Additionally, in both cases, effective restriction of contestation and participation is linked to the presence of widespread clientelism, previously by several political parties, now almost exclusively by the MAS. While this is a phenomenon that permeates most rural areas in Bolivia, it affects Bolívar to a greater extent, as it is one of the poorest municipalities in the country (Author interview, March 2013, Municipio Autónomo de Bolívar 2002). However, base members in Bolívar have complained that those who do not support the MAS have been excluded from municipal projects and other funds (Author interview, March 2013), and in the debates over the autonomy issue, pro-MAS activists expressed their concern that, if the transition does take place, then Bolívar would be left out from projects and resources coming from the central government (Antequera 2010). In Umala, loyalty to the central government is partly the result of the funds and projects peasant authorities receive, particularly through the Indigenous Fund and the program “Bolivia Changes, Evo Delivers.” Furthermore, union authorities in Umala discriminate against non-union members when delivering the funds they manage (Author interview, November 2012). Thus, in both cases, funds are not only distributed inequitably, but also are used by the respective authorities as mechanisms to induce certain behavior, politically and otherwise.

Finally, opportunities for accountability are rather weak in the peasant union, as leaders are more than ever dependent on CSUTCB, which serves as a job-provider and platform for higher political positions at the provincial and regional levels (Komadina and Geffroy 2007). In fact, in Umala there is a group of union leaders, Richard Silva, Teodomiro Rangel, José Laura, and Tomás Pérez, who controls local politics (Author interview, November 2012). Additionally, union leaders make most of the most important decisions, and consultation is not really institutionalized as in Jesús de Machaca. For instance, the development programs in Umala are elaborated in meetings that only Executive Secretaries attend (Gobierno Autónomo de Umala 2006). *Ayllu* authorities are seemingly more accountable to their base members, partly the result of their strict control rules and of the fact that the organization is more decentralized than the peasant unions. However, as mentioned, the fact that many *ayllu* leaders have been co-opted by the MAS has reduced the spaces for accountability in Kirkyawi, as they tend to transform citizens into clients dependent on the funds they provide (COAMAC 2012). Indeed, the lack of

participation by base members in the elaboration of the development programs is regarded as one of the most pressing problems in the municipality (Gobierno Autónomo de Bolívar 2006). Compared to Jesús de Machaca, citizens in Bolívar seem to be passive bystanders. Furthermore, CONAMAQ leaders see this as one of their most urgent concerns, as co-optation is contributing to the distancing of the leadership from the base members, generally weakening the organization and the realization of their demands (Author Interview, March 2013).

Hybrid forms of indigenous governance combine in varying degrees democratic and authoritarian practices. While authorities in these UC systems allow certain levels of participation and contestation, individuals are not completely free to exercise their political and civil rights. Arguably, the most salient characteristic in both Umala and Kirkyawi is the widespread presence of clientelism by indigenous-peasant authorities, which is used to discipline individuals politically. However, unlike the *cocalero* areas, authorities do not employ violence to punish base members who do not comply with their instructions. In general, rural areas in Bolivia are likely to exhibit one of these hybrid forms of indigenous governance. Indeed, given the success of unionization in the countryside, the most likely scenario is a peasant union with a strong identification with Evo Morales, but weaker links with the MAS, which helps explain the hybridization of politics in Bolivia, both subnational and at the national level.

IX. Conclusion: Multiculturalism and Indigenous Governance in Latin America

Indigenous forms of governance in Bolivia and other multi multi-ethnic societies are crucial political spaces. These institutions set the rules and procedures where local politics unfold, and determine, to a great extent, how citizenship is exercised. The particular context in Bolivia, wherein the central government is in the hands of an indigenous president, has helped revive not only the academic interest on indigenous politics, but also the actual weight of such practices for the country's political dynamics. Indeed, the MAS carries out its political campaigns through its many supporting indigenous-peasant organizations throughout the country. These authorities are in charge of securing the party's electoral victories in all elections, as the party does not have a structure of its own. At the same time, however, these can be used as spaces for dissent

and resistance against the central government's hegemonic tendencies. As a result, there is substantial debate as to the democratic nature of these forms of governance; while some romanticize them as fertile soils for democratic governance, others demonize them as utterly autocratic. Reality, nonetheless, provides more nuanced evidence.

This paper sought to better understand the internal functioning of indigenous governments in Bolivia, with a particular emphasis on their political effects and contributions (or lack thereof) to democracy. While some political scientists have indeed studied the functioning of indigenous governments, they have commonly glossed over the question of democracy, privileging other theoretical approaches, such as the debate between liberals and communitarians, or between individual and collective rights. Through a comparative analysis, this paper intended to fill this gap by exploring the role indigenous organizations and party-group relations play in generating different forms of indigenous governance. The variation of UC systems in terms of their political effects on local governance points to the necessity of conducting more systematic subnational comparative research of indigenous governments in the region.

Furthermore, the numerous experiences with indigenous governance and autonomy in Latin America illustrate the diversity of institutional arrangements that take place within these countries. This also underscores the fact that Latin American political systems –as in many other regions– involve more than just the institutions of representative democracy. Thus, considering the variation observed in customary law governments, this paper warns against the implementation of multicultural policies without a previous assessment of local power dynamics, as these different forms of governance can have a negative impact on the exercise of civil and political rights. Hopefully, the findings of this work can provide a fruitful framework to further analyze and compare the multiple forms of indigenous governance in Latin America and beyond.

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